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The evolution of the vice character from the morality plays to Renaissance drama

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE VICE CHARACTER FROM THE MORALITY PLAYS TO RENAISSANCE DRAMA

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PREFACE

This work is an attempt at proving the development of the Vice character in English drama. In part, it is based on the opinion of Bernard Spivack who traced the history of the Vice in his book, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil.

It was Spivack who coined the word "hybrid Vice"--a name given a character that was the product of the old morality Vice and the Latin parasite's fusion. This comic but evil mixture became the roguish village scamp of the farcical Tudor interludes.

In every respect I hold to Spivack's theory on the hybrid Vice. However, from this point on, Spivack investigates the evil nature of certain characters in Medieval and Renaissance drama. In doing so he stresses the morality Vice's influence on both the villains and near villains in Shakespeare's plays.

It is my contention that the morality Vice provided the foundation for the villains which came several centuries later. But I feel that the hybrid Vice was the character who performed a much more important role, for, when Senecan tragedy and Renaissance humanity touched the hybrid Vice, he underwent bifurcation. From his branching came a diverse

dichotomy of progeny which I have taken the liberty of naming "comic-hybrid Vice" and "villain-hybrid Vice."

In order to adequately tell the story of the Vice, it has been necessary to analyze his role in particular miracle, morality, interlude, and Renaissance plays.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Richard Lane who showed a deep interest in my thesis topic, rendered help willingly, and offered excellent advice when it was needed. To him I give many thanks.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen.
Alexander Pope: Essay on Man

Although half a century separates the character of Matthew Merrygreek in Ralph Roister Doister from that of Othello's Iago, these two have a great deal in common. The plays in which they participate are vastly different from each other-- Ralph Roister Doister, written between 1550 and 1553, is a carefree farce that nowhere resembles the tragic tone of Shakespeare's Othello, written early in the 1600's. But Merrygreek and Iago are brothers in spirit nevertheless. Both of them plot, and both of them carry out their plans single-handedly.

Merrygreek dupes Roister Doister into making an attack on Dame Custance's house after she refused Ralph's marriage proposal. Therefore, Merrygreek's crime is merely showing, all in good fun, what a foolish man Roister Doister is. However, Iago's scheme is so cruel that it costs the lives of innocent people.

So it is not in their methods of plotting that these two-- Merrygreek, the Roman-type scamp, and Iago, the vicious murderer,-- are brothers. It is in the way

that they carry out their individual plans (each according to the tone of the drama he inhabits) and in their separate methods of contriving these plans that they are related. For both Merrygreek and Iago are Vice characters.

It is this kind of similarity among the Vice characters from one generation to the next that shows the relationship between the allegorical personifications of evil in the morality plays and the evil intriguers of the Renaissance drama. Yet, it is in the unique way that the Vice evolved from the medieval plays that sets him apart from any other type character. He was pliant enough that he suited whatever role the drama required him to play. He was so yielding to the drama that a genealogical study of him is needed in order to trace the variations in his character. For he left the morality stage with far more in store for him than the old role as a personified abstraction could offer him. He took on new meaning and depth as he became more the man with evil intentions and less the cold, allegorical manifestation of sin.

Even though great changes occurred in the drama between the time of the early moralities and that of the Renaissance plays-- roughly a period of little more than two hundred years-- it is possible to trace the Vice's path as he leaves the morality plays and travels through the farcical interludes. From this point on, he develops

into a two-headed monster, radiating mirth on one side and spreading violence and hate on the other.

The Vice was so flexible that he took on new dimensions by having his name changed from an old morality appellation to a pseudonym that held contemporary significance for his audience. The old names, such as "Greed" and "Avarice", gave way to such new ones as "Pierce Pinchpurse." And the newly adorned Vice slowly began to grow into a man while the evil that he represented in the moralities began to lose its allegorical significance. By the time of Tudor interludes he was no longer "the evil"; the evil was now within him, and he delighted or awed his audience according to the procedure he used to carry out his plans.

It was, in part, due to his audience's devotion that the Vice, whether cavorting or killing, remained on the stage for such an extensive period of time.

> This histrionic intimacy of the Vice with his audience, extending from the homiletic principle organic in his role, explains, at least in part, his survival. He outlives the decay of the allegorical drama because he has developed into a stage personality remarkably attractive to the popular audience, and no small reason for that attraction exists exactly in his unique intimacy with them. His performance, . . . survives in both comedy and tragedy. . . . Strange as it may seem at first, he is able to become both Diccon

> and Iago. The difference between farce and tragedy-- between country yokel and noble Moor, between the commonplace needle and the romantic handkerchief.[1]

The Vice had the ability to hold his audience spellbound. It wasn't his evil that attracted his spectators so much to him; it was his means of carrying out his plans that held their attention.

> But the significant development from the viewpoint of dramatic history does not concern the fact that vice on the stage became, according to contemporary criticism, morally seductive. It concerns the fact that the personified vices, because of their comic vitality, became theatrically fascinating.[2]

The Vice's prominence is further proved by the fact that he received top billing.

> The dominance of the Vice . . . can be demonstrated neatly by the position of his name on the printed casting lists . . . The Vice is named first or last among the list of characters . . .[3]

For the medieval audience the name "Vice" took on special significance. The Vice was "not the summation of

[1]Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (New York, 1958), p. 192.

[2]Ibid., pp. 122-123.

[3]David M. Bevington, From "Mankind" to Marlowe (Cambridge, 1962), p. 81.

the Seven Deadly Sins,"[4] but he was composed of some of them and, perhaps, numerous other vices besides. His name was synonymous with evil-- the Vice had become a prototype.

> And as he became the most persistent and popular character stereotyped on the early Tudor stage, the word "vice," which originally had simply a moral meaning, acquired in his case a special dramaturgical significance. It became the familiar theatrical label for the stock role of the homiletic artist who, as protagonist of the forces of evil, created and sustained the intrigue of almost every morality play.[5]

The allegorical significance of the Vice remained steadfast as the generations passed. He represented whatever was considered evil at the time.

> The evils dramatized, as well as the corresponding virtues, shift with all the winds of religious, moral, social, and political doctrine that blew between the beginning of the fifteenth century and the end of the sixteenth.[6]

The Vice's sole purpose in the morality play was to "illustrate his name and nature"[7] in order to show the evil he represented and to demonstrate a moral lesson for

[4]Spivack, loc. cit., p. 135.

[5]Ibid., p. 135.

[6]Ibid., p. 175.

[7]Ibid., p. 134.

his audience by fighting virtue. He was a distant relation of the Devil only because he performed the Devil's work.

> Although the vices of the later moralities occasionally refer to the Devil as their father or godfather, their relationship to him is doctrinal and hierarchic rather than generic. He is their father only in the loose sense that he is the universal source of evil; and they are, figuratively, his children because by their domination over man they serve the Devil's purpose, which is to bring the human soul to hell.[8]

Out of the rigid structure of the morality came personified abstractions of vices-- Idleness, Envy, Sloth, Shame, Riches-- whose "names . . . expressed the motive and predetermined their actions."[9] When several Vices grouped together on the medieval stage, they paraded themselves about like a vaudeville team and entertained their audiences with their slapstick comedy and bawdy jokes.

> These are the Vices, the jovial scoundrels who are natural opponents of the Virtues, and who are actuated by burning zeal to maintain friendly relations with man. . . . In this capacity they entertain themselves, and incidentally the audience, with merry anedotes of the lives they lead; indulge in sallies of repartee which are coarse, but from the view of the contemporary spectator always amusing, . . .[10]

[8] Ibid., p. 132.

[9] Ibid., p. 156.

[10] Roy W. Mackenzie, The English Moralities from the Point of View of Allegory (Boston, 1914), p. 266.

Nevertheless, these Vices do not forget their purpose, and they set about preparing a way to destroy Mankind.

> Then when they advance to the real business of conquering or supplanting their enemies, the Virtues, they frequently resort to subterfuge . . .[11]

When the Vices win Mankind over to their side, he often joins them in their merriment, which at first seems to be nothing more than good fun. This pleasant seduction provides the moral lesson. Mankind's acceptance of evil is his first step toward spiritual damnation. All the comic repartee that serves to amuse the viewer has a didactic intent.

> The merry quips, gibes, and practical jokes of these representatives of vice might seem at first to be out of harmony with the spirit of the play which has for its avowed object the inculcation of morality. But such is not necessarily the case. As to their fitness in the allegorical scheme, it is to be noted that personified vices, . . . are to be consistently characterized by having carnal conversations and ungodly acts attributed to them. . . . The true nature of the seemingly attractive personifications of evil were always laid bare, and the spectator discovered . . . that while vice is at first sight "pleasant to each man's intent," its ways lead down to hell.[12]

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

The activity of one Vice is repeated by his Vice brothers throughout the moralities. They all serve to destroy the forces of good and capture the soul of Mankind.

> In more or less detail, and with marginal variations, the same characteristics of Vice and victim repeat themselves in almost all the plays that compose the allegorical drama.[13]

The morality Vice was the most outstanding dramatic figure on the early stage. He had the necessary pliability to survive the swift changes that took place in the plays of the late medieval and early Renaissance periods.

> His remarkable impress on the imagination of his own time and on the memory of the generation that outlived his active career on stage is affirmed by so many notices and recollections of him . . . that in this respect at least no other figure of the morality drama can compete, even remotely, with the Vice.[14]

Due to the conspicuous qualities of the Vice's character, the history that surrounded him, and the changes he endured in his journey that turned him from a personified abstraction to the evil personality of a mortal-- from an outward manifestation of evil to an inward one-- he shows

[13]Spivack, loc. cit., p. 175.

[14]Ibid., pp. 135-136.

great complexity. His unique pattern of change from an abstraction to a symbol is as fascinating as the Vice himself is.

CHAPTER II

THE VICE IN THE MORALITY PLAY

The morality plays were "based upon the conflict of abstractions and ideas, virtues and vices, personified."[1] Their purpose was didactic-- to illustrate the proper conduct necessary to gain eternal salvation. They depicted the story of Mankind from the day of his birth to that of his death, showing all the evil pitfalls awaiting him. At the same time the moralities were humorous, and, while they instructed people, they also amused them with the "popular elements of moral generalization, religious beliefs, and farcial horseplay"[2] which they possessed.

The Vice provided the humor by performing his antics on stage, but, at the same time, he was the instigator of schemes which could lead Mankind to hell. His foolery could not deceive the audience into forgetting that his intentions were to help Man to his moral decay by tempting him. Therefore, the Vice provided the action,

[1]Vincent F. Hopper and Gerald B. Lahey, ed. Medieval Mysteries, Moralities, and Interludes (New York, 1962), p. 9.

[2]John Gassner, ed. Medieval and Tudor Drama (New York, 1963), p. 204.

the comedy, and the tragedy.

> In the Moralities most of the really dramatic effects are produced by the champions of Vice, . . . These are the actors who deal in lively sallies of wit, formulate subtle schemes and deep-laid plots, and exhibit exciting rapidity of action.[3]

The Vices try to trick Man into crime and evil by making him believe it is the best possible way of life. At the same time, the Virtues are trying to encourage Man toward good. The moralities stress that because Man is virtuous by nature the "Vices have to resort to subterfuge in order to win his temporary companionship."[4] This "protracted conflict in a world of jarring wills"[5] was known as the Psychomachia, the dramatization between "vice and virtue for the possession of the human soul."[6] While the Virtues try to aid Man in saving his own soul, the "vices are committed to tireless efforts aiming at his damnation."[7]

The Vice is fierce in his attempts at carrying out his plans. Whether his name is Hypocrisy or Ambition,

[3]Roy W. Mackenzie, The English Moralities from the Point of View of Allegory (Boston, 1914), p. 268.

[4]Ibid., ix.

[5]A. P. Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans (London, 1959), p. 100.

[6]Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (New York, 1958), p. 63.

[7]Ibid., p. 100.

Inclination or Infidelity, he is a vicious fellow who represents Sin with a capital S.

> In his role as sardonic intriguer in every play in which he appeared he inflicted upon his gullible victims a variety of deceits and seductions-- tragedy for them but laughter for him-- which illustrated the meaning his abstract name of the moment expressed-- Envy, Avarice, Sensual Suggestion, Ill Report, Ambidexter, Iniquity, and numerous designations besides of qualities abstract and pejorative. But all his separate performances, under whatever name, in play after play are merely variations on a single theme-- his dexterity in effecting, through artful dissimulation and intrigue, the spiritual and physical ruin of frail humanity; and all his particular names are enveloped within the generic title of "The Vice."[8]

Because evil is so much a part of Man's world, the Vice's role continues in the drama long after the morality plays are outdated. He begins as a "dramatic metaphor for a principle that has its only real existence in the inner, moral life of man."[9] But, as he outgrows the genre of the morality play, he becomes less of a metaphor and more of a human being.

Yet, it is most important at this point to note that the Vice did not originate with the morality play.

[8]Ibid., pp. 56-57.

[9]Douglas Cole, Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton, 1962), p. 25.

He "derived from the Devil of the Mysteries"[10] and began "roughly where the Miracle-devil leaves off."[11] And, in order to picture the complete evolution of the Vice character, it is necessary to go back a step and see him in his first stage of development.

In the miracle plays, the pageants based on Bible stories, certain figures represented evil. Their names were not abstractions, however, but these characters were villains, such as Herod and Pilate. They followed the will of the Devil, the chief enemy of God, who, sometimes dressed as a bear, would leap about on the stage yelling "Out Harrow!" Of course the Devil's cavorting amused the audience, and this same clowning characteristic was inherited by the Vice.

> The comic character of the Vice is due . . . to the comedy latent or developed in the devil of the miracle-play, his prototype.[12]

In the Coventry Pageant drama, "The Massacre of the Innocents," Herod shows his evil nature as well as his ridiculous one when he boasts of his greatness.

[10] Katherine Lee Bates, The English Religious Drama (London, 1909), p. 206.

[11] Rossiter, loc. cit., p. 92.

[12] Robert Withington, "The Development of the Vice," in Essays in Memory of Barrett Wendell, ed. W. R. Castle and Paul Kaufman (Cambridge, 1926), p. 158.

> And the myghttyst conquerowre that
> eyuer walkid on grownd!
> For I am evyn he thatt made bothe hevin
> and hell;
> And of my myghte powar holdith vp this
> world rownd.[13]
>
> (ll. 486-88)

Unlike Herod, Mak in "The Second Shepherd's Play" is not cruel. Nevertheless, he shows that he is in alignment with the Devil when he draws a circle around the sleeping shepherds from whom he is about to steal a sheep. Then he recites an incantation to make them sleep through the robbery. To make the charm complete he says:

> Ouer youre heydys my hand I lyft:
> Outt go youre een! Fordo your syght![14]
>
> (ll. 283-84)

Later in the play, he tries to trick the shepherds into thinking that the stolen sheep is his new-born son. But the sheep bleats and foils Mak's plans. Still, Mak is a clever rogue who, through derision and false prayer, seems to be in league with Satan.

> Further, Mak is in some way intended to
> be associated with the devil. . . . Like
> a devil, he mocks holy forms and invokes

[13]Joseph Quincy Adams, ed. Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas (Cambridge, 1924), p. 264.

[14]Ibid., p. 149.

> in place of the true Lord, the medieval lord of irresponsibility "Pontius Pilate."[15]

When the shepherds learn that Mak has duped them, they give him a light punishment and then leave to adore the newly born Christ child. Thus, at the very last, the New Testament story became a part of the play. But the significant part is that which is centered around Mak, a man who lives by his wits and by his roguery.

With such characters as Herod and Mak, the miracle plays paved the way for the Vice characters of the moralities. Even in his earliest form, the Vice was both evil and amusingly whimsical by nature.

> He represented the element of evil which is inseparable from human nature. Viewed from one side he was eminently comic; and his pranks cast a gleam of merriment across the dullness of the scene through which he hovered with the lightness of Harlequin.[16]

So it was that the Vice came into the morality plays, providing the "humorous relief to its serious story"[17] and acting the "perpetrator of mischief, the manipulator of

[15]Hopper, loc. cit., p. 43.

[16]John Addington Symonds, Shakspere's Predecessors in the English Drama (London, 1913), p. 120.

[17]Spivack, loc. cit., p. 331.

action in the play."[18]

Since the "doctrine of Man's salvation was the essential core"[19] of the plays he inhabited, the Vice was the means through which the tediousness of the moral lesson was broken.

> A debate between personified vices and virtues is not likely in itself to be particularly entertaining, as the authors of the moral plays . . . saw. So they sought to give liveliness and interest to their sombre stories by the introduction of a "Vice," . . . He was a comic figure . . . hardly in harmony with the serious general tone of the piece but certainly, as he was intended to be, a relief from the dead level of didacticism of the play.[20]

Nevertheless, with all the tomfoolery the Vice performs, he is never a villain in the moralities. He never assumes the human role of a Herod or a Judas. He is a sort of an incomplete everyman "uninformed by soul, amoral rather than immoral, amiably mischievous rather than fearsomely vicious, without reason yet somehow comically shrewd."[21]

[18]Ashley H. Thorndike, English Comedy (New York, 1929), p. 51.

[19]Cole, loc. cit., p. 24.

[20]John W. Ashton, ed. Types of English Drama (New York, 1940), pp. 31-32.

[21]Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936), p. 433.

The Vice's incompleteness makes him lack human sensibility. He feels no pain and no remorse for the trouble he causes.

> For all his many dimensions, the Vice of the morality play was essentially passionless and nonhuman, lacking both feeling and responsibility, . . .[22]

In The Castle of Perseverance (the earliest extant morality play in English literature) which was written in the early part of the fifteenth century, Mankind or Humanum Genus is surrounded by the platforms of the insensitive, boastful creatures, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Each tells how he gained power through evil scheming. Through the help of Covetousness, World controls all the lands. Flesh, attended by Gluttony, Lechery, and Sloth lives in great comfort while his aids debase Mankind.

Belial, one of the few devils to appear in a morality play, states that he wants Mankind to be destroyed. There are specific stage directions for him that state:

> He that schal pleye Belyal,
> loke that he haue gunnepowder
> brennyn /ge/ In pypys in his
> handis and in his eris and in
> his ers, whanne he gothe
> to bat /tel/[23]

[22]Cole, loc. cit., p. 28.

[23]Adams, loc. cit., p. 264.

This held the audience's attention and promoted gaity as well, for Belial had previously announced his very special talents and desires.

> Now I sytte, Satanas, in my sad synne
> A deuyl towty in draf as a drake!
> I champe and I chase, I choke
> on my chynne,
> I am boystows and bold, as Belyal
> the blake.
> What folk that I grope, thei gapyn
> and grenne. . . .
> Bothe the bak and the buttoke
> brestyth al on brenne; . . .
> I care I am cloyed
> And fowle I am a-noyed
> But Mankynd be stroyed
> Bedykes and be denne. . . .[24]
>
> (ll. 170-208)

Each of the Vices represents a flaw in human nature; he is a "stage metaphor for the sly insinuation of moral evil into the human breast."[25]

The Castle of Perseverance introduces two important factors in the Vice's advancement. The first is that of a chief Vice, Covetousness, a "radix malorum," who is the World's treasurer. He is the one who, through false promises, seduces Mankind out of the castle when the other Vices failed to do so in combat. By this, he becomes the

[24]Ibid., p. 267.

[25]Spivack, loc. cit., p. 152.

one who brings Mankind to sin.

> The selective development gave rise to the practice of having one vice stand in a position of higher dramatic importance than the others, a position defined by both his doctrinal distinction as "radix malorum" and his concomitant role as a prime mover of the moral evil in the play. . . . Like all vices, he represented the force of moral destruction in the life of man; as "the" Vice, he became the chief antagonist of the human protagonist, the master intriguer and seducer whose aim was always the spiritual ruin of his victim.[26]

The second important factor is that of the character of Backbiter, a Vice who practices double-dealing. He is first seen introducing himself as the World's messenger prior to his revealing his intentions.

> In this holte I huntë here
> For to spye a preuy pley;
> For whanne Mankynde is clothyd clere,
> Thanne schal I techyn hym the wey
> To the dedly synnys seuene.[27]
>
> (ll. 694-98)

Later, he runs to the Devil's scaffold to tell Belial that the forces of evil have failed to capture Mankind.

[26]Cole, loc. cit.

[27]Adams, loc. cit., p. 271.

> Heyl, dynge deuyl in the delle!
> Heyl, lowe in helle!
> I cum to thee, talys to telle.[28]

He leaves Belial's scaffold and runs to Flesh's platform. This time his story is changed, and he states that Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery have put him to sorrow because they let Mankind get away. Thus, he causes his fellow Vices to be flogged. By the time he reaches World's scaffold, his story has changed, and he claims that Covetousness should be punished for letting Mankind slip away from the forces of evil.

> Lo, syr Werld, ye moun a-gryse
> That ye be seruyd on this wyse!
> Go pley you with syr Coueytyse
> Til his crowne crake![29]
>
> (ll. 1850-53)

Thus, Backbiter delights in having his cronies punished as much as he rejoices in Mankind's falling into sin. However, his double-dealing is not a characteristic of any of the Vices in Mankind, a minor morality play written nearly seventy-five years after The Castle of Perseverance was. Nevertheless, the evil characters in this later play are seen in a state of advancement.

[28]Ibid., p. 276.

[29]Ibid., p. 277.

There is no devil *per se* in *Mankind*, but there is a quasi-devil figure by the name of Titivillus who, like Belial in *The Castle of Perseverance*, is very much involved in the plot to destroy Mankind and boasts of his greatness.

> Although Titivillus is a figure in transition from devil to vice, . . . his guile is still largely physical, . . . manipulated by a laughing artist who presents himself to the audience like sleight-of-hand performer . . .[30]

Titivillus' name is not that of a Biblical devil, but it suggests the meaning "totally (tutti) vile."[31] His first appearance in the play is preceded by his shouting and by the firing of gunpowder. The stage directions state: "Enter Titivillus, horribly arrayed like a devil with a net in his hand."[32] In his first speech, he announces that he is "Lord of Lords."

> Ego sum dominancium dominus,
> And my name is Titivullis.
> Ye that haue goode hors, to yow I
> sey, caueatis!
> Here ys an abyll felyschyppe
> to tryse hym out at yowur gatis.[33]
>
> (ll. 468-71)

[30]Spivack, *loc. cit.*, p. 125.

[31]Withington, *loc. cit.*, p. 160.

[32]Adams, *loc. cit.*, p. 314.

[33]*Ibid.*

With such an appearance, Titivillus is at once a comic and cruel figure. He is a "sadistic comedian, giving a foretaste of the jocular fiends incarnate."[34] First he steals Mankind's prayer beads, and then he puts a board in the earth to make Mankind's tilling a more difficult job. Unable to plow or pray his rosary, Mankind falls an easy victim to evil. Where the other Vices have failed, Titivillus is victorious in his plans to corrupt Mankind, and he tells his victim, "Titivillus kan lerne yow many praty thyngis!"[35] (l. 565) In a short time, Mankind shows his spiritual decay by falling asleep when he should have gone to church.

Through his interference with Mankind's dream, Titivillus causes him to believe that Mercy, Mankind's good counselor, has been hanged for horse stealing. Before he does so, Titivillus prepares the audience for the game he has planned.

> A praty gamexall be scheude
> yow, or ye go hens.
> Ye may here hym snore; he ys
> sade a-slepe!
> Qwyst! pesse! the Deullys dede!
> I xall go ronde in hys ere.

[34]Rossiter, loc. cit., p. 68.

[35]Adams, loc. cit., p. 316.

"A-lasse, Mankynde! a-lasse! Mercy
stown a mere![36]

With this victory in hand, Titivillus keeps the didactic purpose of the play in full light when he leaves the prostrate form of Mankind while saying:

For well, euerychon! for I haue
don my game,
For I haue brought Mankynde
to myscheff and to shame.[37]

However, Titivillus is not the chief Vice. He is too closely related to the Devil to be the "radix malorum." It is Mischief who serves in the capacity as Vice leader. However, he is more of a scalawag than a character bent on destroying Mankind's soul. He is very closely related to the Vice parasite that comes, in part, to the English drama from the Roman comedy and predominates the Tudor comedy. He goes about with his cohorts in search of people he can gull.

. . . Mischief is not far from the "parasite"-- a worthless companion who leads the thoughtless characters astray; but he is also comic . . .[38]

[36]Ibid., p. 317.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Withington, loc. cit., p. 161.

With Nought, New-Gyse, and Now-A-Days, Mischief "pokes fun at the pedantic Mercy."[39] He tells Mankind to leave his work and shorten his prayers in order to learn new pleasures. Together Mischief and his clan compose a "troop of . . . virile, resourceful, and red-blooded scoundrels"[40] who prance about and perform indecent gestures on stage.

> The Vices, New-Gyse . . . , Nought . . . , and Nowadays are all buffoons, and in the knockabout turns indelicate places are hit and crude comments follow. They stand for smart good-for-nothings who deride and molest . . . Mankind.[41]

The play has one great comic figure in the character of New-Gyse who serves as a forerunner of the fool in Renaissance drama. When Mankind falls into despair over his sins, New-Gyse attempts to show him how to hang himself with a halter. As he demonstrates for Mankind, New-Gyse nearly hangs himself. New-Gyse's name is not in any way a symbol for this kind of action; he was a new feature in the morality play which was branching out.

Another area of the morality's advancement concerns

[39]Robert Goldsmith, The Wise Fools in Shakespeare (Lansing, 1955), p. 22.

[40]Mackenzie, loc. cit., ix.

[41]Rossiter, loc. cit.

secularization. In John Skelton's play Magnyfycence, which was written about 1516, the king, Magnyfycence, whose main concern is other than the fear of losing his soul, represents Mankind. His primary interest is in keeping his power and ruling his land. And the emphasis of the drama is more on man's duty in this world to make it a better place in which to live than it is on man's struggle to gain his eternal salvation. Also, Magnyfycence's punishment is given to him in his earthly life when he loses his power and wealth.

> Magnificence is a morality that has undergone a degree of secular transformation. Its hero represents a limited range of human experience when compared with Mankind or Humanum Genus, and its figures are courtly, satiric types rather than generic derivations of the seven Deadly Sins. The interest is historical rather than timeless; . . .[42]

Magnyfycence changes from a good to an evil king because he follows his evil counselors' advice.

> The central figure is no longer frail and sinful mankind; he is Magnificence, a worldly prince, surrounded by good and evil counsellors, drawn to extravagance and misgovernment by the advice of self-seekers, . . .[43]

[42]David Bevington, From "Mankind" to Marlowe (Cambridge, 1962), p. 136.

[43]C. F. Tucker Brooke, The Tudor Drama (New York, 1911), pp. 82-83.

Moreover, Magnyfycence is a bit like Clarence in Richard III in his inability to recognize his enemy. But one of the reasons for his being so slow to recognize his foe is that the enemy is disguised. Clokyd Colusyon becomes a priest called Sober Sadnesse; Fancy goes by the title of Largess, and Counterfet Countenaunce takes the character of Good Demeynaunce. In this way they were able to gain entrance to Magnyfycence's court.

> The simplest form of such deceit was the use of a virtuous alias, sometimes accompanied by physical disguise, . . .[44]

Folly is the chief Vice, for when he comes on the stage, he takes the lead position and "governs this covey of beasts and their royal prisoner."[45] He deceives Magnyfycence by feigning mental illness.

> He pretends to be "brainsick," but his asides show that he is deliberately fooling the prince.[46]

But Folly's sworn brother Fancy is more important to the history of the Vice character. He is a dwarf who "dances up and down until he is dizzy."[47] He is even more

[44]Cole, loc. cit.

[45]A. R. Heiserman, Skelton and Satire (Chicago, 1961), p. 111.

[46]Ibid., p. 114.

[47]Robert S. Kinsman, "Skelton's Magnyfycence: The Strategy of the 'Old Sayde Sawe'," SP, LXIII (1966), p. 115.

ominous than Folly, for he has not "shed his childish fantastical waywardness"[48] due to his incomplete growth. To the medieval audience, there "was always a certain misshapenness about sinners . . . which provoked scornful laughter."[49] The moral nature of a deformed person was as malformed as his body; therefore, Fancy's nature was discernible by his very appearance. He is a bit reminiscent of Richard III, but he does not have Richard's viciousness. Nevertheless, Fancy's deformity puts him in the same category that the little villain king occupies.

However, Fancy, as well as Folly, Lyberte, and Mischief, represents "destructive forces within the mind of the hero."[50] The other Vices represent evil forces that prey on their victims from the outside.

> They [the Vices] represent not only the impulses toward evil in man's nature, but also malignant forces from without, . . .[51]

Hence, two important things were happening to the drama. First, it was becoming more secular. And second, it was slowly starting to release the Vice character's metaphorical significance. The playwrights were beginning

[48] Ibid., p. 112.

[49] Withington, loc. cit., p. 156.

[50] Mackenzie, loc. cit., p. 80.

[51] Ibid.

to put evil where it really exists-- in the mind of man. By the time of the Tudor interludes, the Vice character was becoming a man with an evil nature, and his old allegorical name and nature were being concealed.

CHAPTER III

THE HYBRID VICE OF THE INTERLUDE

Up to the time of the genre of the interlude, the English drama was "concerned with one topic, and one only: human salvation."[1] But before the first half of the sixteenth century came to a close, the stage conflict between the Vices and the Virtues was a thing of the past. As the Renaissance spirit grew stronger, the emphasis on the Psychomachia grew weaker.

> With the advent of humanism and the early Tudor court, morality plays became tedious and gave place to lighter and much shorter moral interludes . . .[2]

When the stage "ceased to be a pulpit,"[3] the atmosphere of the theatre changed to one of mirth, and the characters in the dramas became people.

> It is only towards the end of the allegorical convention, as the plays gradually lost their metaphorical transparency, that their "lascivious toys" also lost

[1]Dover J. Wilson, The Fortunes of Falstaff (New York, 1944), p. 17.

[2]Ibid., p. 18.

[3]Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (New York, 1958), p. 59.

> their allusive significance and took on the character of comedy or titillation for its own sake.[4]

No longer was the stage hero punished in the hereafter for his earthly transgressions. He was now a historical figure who had to abide the established standard of conduct or be brought to earthly justice; and his concern was now the world.

> . . . the Psychomachia was energetic enough to shift the ground of its serious issue from heaven and hell to reward and punishment in the life of this world, and supple enough to enfold for a time the secular interests of the new age-- ethics, politics, and history at first, and then love and romance.[5]

As all of the other abstract characters of the morality plays gave way to the secularization of the drama, the Vice refused to undertake a sudden change.

> But the Vice stubbornly resisted the process and only succumbed in the end to a much slower transformation. Reluctantly draping his allegorical nakedness, he persisted in his allegorical function.[6]

This reluctance on the part of the Vice to acclimate himself to the Renaissance drama did not hamper his vitality

[4]Ibid., p. 121.

[5]Ibid., p. 59.

[6]Ibid.

in them. He was the sole abstraction on a stage with "real" men and women, and he still caused them grief while he promoted laughter.

In this way the Vice caused the drama to have a two-fold tone. Wherever he is, the elements of comedy and tragedy exist. The only things that separate the comic from the tragic tone are the other characters in the play and the seriousness of the situation which surrounds them.

> It explains why such plays are their own advertisement, both pleasant tragedies and pitiful comedies, with their implicated extremes of high seriousness and broad hilarity. The secret of this double mood lies in the radical difference between the nature of the Vice and the nature of the victim.[7]

Comedy especially advanced rapidly in the interludes. The Vice characters of earlier drama stepped into the new drama without any difficulty, but they provided limited resources for the playwright.

> In the interludes English realistic comedy attains full growth. The mustard seed of buffoonery, found almost by accident in the mystery and early morality, has completely choked the more serious matter.[8]

[7] Ibid., pp. 194-195.

[8] C. F. Tucker Brooke, The Tudor Drama (New York, 1911), p. 97.

The late interludes began to take on characteristics of the Latin comedy and the Senecan tragedy as the playwright looked outside the English drama for new material.

> A radically different type of theatre, however, takes shape by its side before the end of the fifteenth century, achieves especially neat and sometimes witty concentration in the clever English "interludes," and then attains classical features associated with Roman Comedy and Senecan Tragedy . . .[9]

As the Vice fits into the interludes, he loses a great deal of his metaphorical quality and takes on human traits. Whatever Vice role is demanded of him is met. For, as he becomes half man, half metaphor, either part of him can control, at will, the function the Vice is to serve.

> But since he himself is neither moral nor mortal he is free to serve the craving of the popular audience for something besides high seriousness. His role, in consequence, opens itself up to an expanding variety of comic motifs. He appears as a practical joker and clever fool, delighting the audience with his satirical wit, his frequent grossness, his antics (both physical and verbal), and above all by his consummate artistry in deceit.[10]

[9]John Gassner, ed. Medieval and Tudor Drama (New York, 1963), p. xvi.

[10]Spivack, loc. cit., p. 198.

The Vice character, Nichol Newfangle, in Ulpian Fulwell's Like Will to Like Quod the Devil to the Colier shows the marks of the secular influence. He carries out the entire action in this "farce built upon allegorical foundation."[11] As a result, he is the unifying force that brings all the worldly sinful characters, who need only little temptation to lead them astray, to ruin.

> Here there is further division of the bad into so many different characters that the action has little unity except in the character of the Vice. . . . Nichol Newfangle, one of the gayest of his kind, . . .[12]

Nichol Newfangle is a first rate comedian. He works for Lucifer, yet he mocks the Devil with insults. Lucifer has no important role in the play; his purpose is no more than that of a "lumbering helpless target at whom the Vice shoots his . . . jests."[13] It is Newfangle who performs and sings to set a gay mood.

> The vice of the play, Nichol Newfangle, is the most imposing of his class. He

[11]Katherine Lee Bates, The English Religious Drama (London, 1909), p. 234.

[12]Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936), p. 242.

[13]Spivack, loc. cit., p. 131.

> rallies the audience with all the assurance of a star comedian . . .[14]

Even though the characters have quasi-allegorical names, the play is primarily secular. Nichol Newfangle, Tom Tosspot, Hankin Hangman, and Cuthbert Cutpurse are a few of the names which "sufficiently show the author's endeavor to substitute comedy for allegory."[15] Also, the theme is not that of the Psychomachia. Instead, it is based on the earthly punishment the sinners must receive for their misspent lives. This purpose is stated in the prologue to Like Will to Like.

> Herein, as it were in a glass, see you may
> The advancement of virtue, of vice the decay:
> To what ruin ruffians and roisters are brought;
> You may here see of them the final end:
> Begging is the best, though that end be nought;
> But hanging is worse, if they do not mend.[16]

And Newfangle is the very one who causes his followers to meet such ends. He stands as a lesson for all those who

[14]Brooke, loc. cit., p. 109.

[15]John Addington Symonds, Shakspere's Predecessors in the English Drama (London, 1913), p. 135.

[16]The Dramatic Writings of Ulpian Fulwell, ed. John S. Farmer (New York, 1966), pp. 3-4.

put the fashions of the day before correct living. And, at the opening of the play, he tells the audience exactly who he is and what he does. All he knows has been learned from the source of evil.

> Nichol Newfangle is my name, do
> you not me know?
> My whole education to you I
> shall show.
> For first, before I was born, I
> remember very well,
> That my grandsire and I made
> a journey into hell;
> Where I was bound prentice before
> my nativity
> To Lucifer himself, such was
> my agility.
> All kinds of sciences he taught
> unto me:
> That unto the maintenance of pride
> might best agree.
> I learn'd to make gowns with
> long sleeves and wings:
> I learn'd to make ruffs like
> calves' chitterlings,
> Caps, hats, coats, with all kinds
> of apparels,
> And especially breeches as big
> as good barrels.[17]

He shows the audience that extravagance and loose living lead to suffering; two of his victims, Ralph Roister and Tom Tosspot, are impoverished and two others, Cuthbert Cutpurse and Piers Pickpurse, are hanged for robbery. At the last, he rides to hell on the Devil's back, laughing at those he has duped.

[17]Ibid., p. 5.

Nichol Newfangle is still more Vice than he is a man. He is working directly for the Devil. Yet, the play that he brings to life is concerned with the world and life, not salvation and death.

Matthew Merrygreek is a character who shows far more advancement in the history of the Vice than does Nichol Newfangle. Merrygreek is the Vice parasite of Ralph Roister Doister, an interlude written by Nicholas Udall between 1534 and 1552, which shows the direct influence of Roman comedy on English drama.

> "Roister Doister" is probably . . . the most careful imitation of Plautine drama produced during the sixteenth century . . .[18]

Both Merrygreek and Ralph Roister Doister have ancestors in the Latin comedy of Terence and Plautus which usually had a "conflict of tricks"[19] for its plot which was filled with lively machination. In the prologue of Ralph Roister Doister, Udall acknowledges the Roman writers.

> The wyse poets long time heretofore
> Vnder merrie comedies secretes did declare,

[18]Brooke, loc. cit., p. 159.

[19]Ashley H. Thorndike, English Comedy (New York, 1929), p. 30.

> Wherein was contained very vertuous lore,
> With mysteries and forewarnings very rare.
> Suche to write neither Plautus nor Terence
> dyd spare, . . .[20]
>
> (11. 15-19)

From these writers Udall found the material to create Ralph, the braggart soldier, and Matthew Merrygreek, the hybrid Vice, who is part Latin parasite, part morality Vice.

> It is generally recognized that the "parasite" came to the English drama from the Latin comedy . . . The "dynamic character was, however, not unknown in earlier English comedy; and doubtless many in the audience which greeted Merygreke's appearance . . . recognized a fellow and kindred spirit to Titivullus of the morality.[21]

There is, however, a great deal of difference between Titivillus and Merrygreek. Titivillus was a Vice struggling to gain Mankind's soul. He had a strong motive to support his purpose whereas Merrygreek is totally divorced from the Psychomachia. All he can possibly gain from duping Roister Doister is enjoyment-- the strongest motive the hybrid Vice has. And Merrygreek gets two kinds of enjoyment from gulling Ralph. First, he is amused at

[20]Joseph Quincy Adams, ed. Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas. (Cambridge, 1924), p. 424.

[21]Robert Withington, "The Development of the Vice," in Essays in Memory of Barrett Wendell, ed. W. R. Castle and Paul Kaufman (Cambridge, 1926), p. 153.

watching the stupid, egotistical Roister Doister cut down. Second, he enjoys the intrigue, a characteristic that can be traced back before the time of Mak in the "Second Shepherd's Play."

In Roister Doister, Merrygreek finds an easy man to outwit. Ralph is a inveterate braggart who asks, "Why did God make me suche a goodly person?"[22] (I. ii. 3) Therefore, it takes only flattery from Merrygreek to win Ralph.

Merrygreek knows that Ralph is a fool, and, besides getting money from Roister Doister, he also plans to have good sport at Ralph's expense when he finds out that the braggart is mooning over Dame Christian Custance, a well-to-do widow.

Ralph seeks Merrygreek for his advisor and gives him money for promising to help. Here Merrygreek serves as the hero's counselor-- a position frequently held by the Vice.

The scamp says that he will tell Dame Custance of Ralph's fine qualities, but his intentions are just the opposite. When they go to Dame Custance's house, Merrygreek talks to Margery Mumblecrust, her nurse; these two make fun of Ralph's cowardice while he stands by thinking he is being complimented. When Margery asks Merrygreek

[22]Adams, loc. cit., p. 426.

to enlighten her about Ralph's bravery, he responds:

> This is hee, vnderstand,
> That killed the Blewe Spider
> in Blanchepounder Lande.[23]
>
> (I. iv 63-64)

Thus, he openly mocks Ralph, who is too dense to grasp the full meaning of the situation.

As soon as Merrygreek speaks to Dame Custance, he tells her a vastly different story about Ralph than he had promised to tell. On returning to Roister Doister, Merrygreek exaggerates the angry retort of Dame Custance. Ralph, on hearing it, fears he will die from the rejection.

Since Merrygreek is a master of machination, he takes Ralph to Dame Custance's house for what Ralph thinks will win her favor. Instead, it ends up as a letter-reading episode wherein Ralph's love note to Custance, which has been incorrectly punctuated through Merrygreek's instigation, brings the play to a climax. Custance, angered by the note, wants no part of Roister Doister. While the foolish Ralph is trying to fathom the situation, Merrygreek says the braggart is to blame for what has happened because he wrote the letter.

[23] Ibid., p. 434.

> Why, ye made it your-selfe, ye
> tolde me, by this light![24]
>
> (III. iv. 77)

This is the Vice character of the morality plays telling the hero that his downfall is his own fault.

Merrygreek's next step is to lead Ralph to revenge by making war on Dame Custance. Armed and with his head covered with a kitchen pail, Ralph advances on the enemy. However, Merrygreek has prepared Dame Custance for the fight. Therefore, the battle ends when Ralph receives a few blows.

With all the trouble that Merrygreek makes for Ralph, he is not really cruel. No one is hurt. Only Ralph's pride suffers a bit from Dame Custance's rejection. However, she would have refused Ralph's proposal anyway, for she had been planning all along to marry Gawyn Goodluck. In the final analysis, anything Ralph suffers from the whole ordeal comes as poetic justice which serves as retribution for his egotistical ways. In truth, Merrygreek is a playful imp without malice.

> Merrygreek, in Roister Doister, is not a disagreeable character, and certainly not vicious, although he plays tricks on Ralph . . .[25]

[24] Ibid., p. 449.

[25] Withington, loc. cit., p. 162.

Yet, Merrygreek is most important to the story of the Vice character. It is from such a hybrid Vice as he-- the product of the morality Vice's fusion with the Roman parasite character-- that the fool, the scamp, and the villain grow.

However, while the Vice remains in his hybrid Vice stage, he is thrust into an environment that he is not morally capable of living in without causing either mild trouble, which results in a comic situation, or tragedy.

> His eventual subjection to punishment-- imprisonment, exile, hanging-- is merely one aspect of the humanizing effort at work on him. But at the same time the whole process is restricted by the allegorical law of his nature, and he is always more or less hybrid-- an amoral, elemental force overlaid with the traits of humanity.[26]

The hybrid Vice does not need much motive for his intrigue or his actions. At will he causes discord in a village, gulling victim after victim and causing friends to be at war against each other.

In addition to Matthew Merrygreek, another fine example of the hybrid Vice appears in Gammer Gurton's Needle, a play written by a "Mr. S." in 1563. The action is centered around Diccon the Bedlam, a troublemaker who

[26]Spivack, loc. cit., p. 198.

is very much a mixture of the Roman parasite character and the morality Vice.

> As an intriguer and manipulator of the action, Diccon is a figure parallel to the tricky rascals of Roman comedy, but, both as a practical joker and as a rogue and vagabond, he is more clearly a successor of the vices of the morality play.[27]

Like Matthew Merrygreek, Diccon is a relative of Backbiter whose role began in The Castle of Perseverance. Just as Merrygreek acts as a go-between, carrying and distorting Ralph's and Dame Custance's messages, Diccon runs from one village inhabitant to another, fabricating stories which, in time, lead to anger and violence.

Although Diccon does not in any way cause the needle, a valuable commodity in sixteenth century England, to get lost, he uses the situation surrounding its loss to his own advantage.

> Diccon the Bedlam, or town loafer, seizes upon this misfortune as a possible source of mirth.[28]

[27]Charles Read Baskerville, Virgil B. Heltzel, and Arthur H. Nethercot, ed. Elizabethan and Stuart Plays (New York, 1934), p. 47.

[28]Thorndike, loc. cit., p. 60.

Again, like Merrygreek, Diccon has no motive other than gaining amusement from the events which follow his scheming. In the manner of the morality Vice, he announces to the audience that he intends to cause trouble.

> Here is a matter worthy glozing
> Of Gammer Gurton's needle losing,
> And a foul piece of wark!
> A man, I think, might make a play
> And need no word to this they say,
> Being but half a clerk.
>
> Soft, let me alone! I will take charge
> This matter further to enlarge
> Within a time short.
> If ye will mark my toys, and note,
> I will give ye leave to cut my throat
> If I make not good sport.[29]
>
> (II. ii. 7-18)

The first thing Diccon does is to go to Dame Chat's house to tell her that Gammer's favorite rooster has been stolen and that she is the suspect. There is no reason for Diccon's telling such a story, but it is the very thing to do in order to cause the outcome he desires.

Diccon communicates with a devil next-- or at least says he does. Hodge, Gammer's houseboy, asks Diccon what the devil told him, and Diccon, true to his ancestry, shows great imagination.

[29]Baskerville, loc. cit., p. 57.

The whoreson talked to me, I
know not well of what:
One while his tongue it ran and
paltered of a cat;
Another while he stammered
still upon a rat;
Last of all, there was nothing
but every word "Chat! Chat!"
But this I well perceived, before
I wold him rid,
Between "Chat" and the "rat" and the
"cat" the needle is hid.
Now, whether Gib, our cat, have eat
it in her maw,
Or Doctor Rat, our curate, have found
it in the straw,
Or this Dame Chat, your neighbor,
have stolen it, God he knoweth!
But by the morrow at this time we shall
learn how the matter goeth.[30]

(II. iii. 18-27)

After enlightening Hodge, Diccon tells Gammer Gurton that he saw Dame Chat pick up the needle. This causes Gammer, with the aid of Hodge, to pay Dame Chat a visit. Dame Chat thinks Gammer has come to question her about the stolen rooster, and Gammer thinks Dame Chat is on the defensive because she has the needle. All the while Diccon, like all Vice characters, sits back and enjoys the trouble he has caused.

Dame Chat and Gammer's verbal argument soon becomes a physical one, and Hodge is beaten by Dame Chat. This gives Diccon the necessary means to create another tale.

[30]Ibid., p. 59.

When the scuffle is over, Diccon returns to Dame Chat to tell her that Hodge is planning to steal her poultry to revenge the beating she gave him. Then he tells Doctor Rat, the parson, that someone should go to Dame Chat's house and catch her with the needle in her possession. Much to Diccon's amusement, the parson goes and receives the blows meant for Hodge.

Master Bailey, the bailiff, figures out the cause of the trouble, and he tells the other characters.

> Yea, but he that made one lie
> about your cock stealing,
> Will not stick to make another
> what time lies be in dealing.
> I ween the end will prove
> this brawl did first arise
> Upon no other ground but
> only Diccon's lies.[31]
>
> (V. ii. 166-69)

Again Diccon shows his heritage in his inability to feel remorse for his actions. He confesses his guilt, but is only sorry that he didn't get to see Doctor Rat being beaten.

> What if I have? Five hundred
> have I seen within these seven years.
> I am sorry for nothing else but
> that I did not see the sport

[31] Ibid., p. 72.

> Which was between them when
> they met, as they themselves report.[32]
>
> (V. ii. 223-25)

There is a streak of viciousness in Diccon that is not evident in Merrygreek. Both supply the humor and the action for their separate plays, and both are hybrid Vice characters. However, Diccon takes great joy in seeing people beaten and bruised. He is a very close kin of the kind of hybrid Vice who, at a later date, becomes the villain who manipulates the tragedy.

> In the central figure of the piece,
> Diccon the Bedlam, is a merry-spirited
> village Iago, laying plot upon plot
> with no other purpose than gratifica-
> tion of his own super-subtle imagina-
> tion.[33]

The only thing that keeps Diccon from being a villain is the comic situation which surrounds the earthy country folk who inhabit Gammer Gurton's Needle.

In Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil, Spivack holds to the opinion that the grafting of the morality Vice to the Roman parasite resulted in the hybrid Vice. On the other hand, Spivack believes that the morality Vice becomes a villain when he is introduced to the elements of the

[32]Ibid., p. 74.

[33]Brooke, loc. cit., p. 163.

Senecan tragedy.

But a closer look at the hybrid Vice discloses the fact that it was he who underwent the bifurcation, not the morality Vice. And, as a result, the hybrid Vice produced two offspring who, in the course of the next two chapters, will be called the comic-hybrid Vice and the villain-hybrid Vice. With the arrival of these two brothers, the Vice has now advanced to such a degree that he is ready for full-blown drama, both comedy and tragedy.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMIC-HYBRID VICE IN DRAMA

The ideas the English dramatists borrowed from the Roman comedy took a great deal of the low-life activity, the grossness, and the slapstick qualities from the hybrid plays.

> From Plautus and Terence the English comic writers learn to refine their native buffoonery by the cultivation of a more intellectual wit, enriching the clownage of plebeian life by the addition of those laughable characters and incidents which arise amid more complex societies.[1]

Still, the character noted for carrying out bawdy, rough antics-- the morality Vice-- was, with some modification, present on the English stage throughout the time Shakespeare was writing plays.

> Even when the English drama was well entered upon its ultimate catholic career in the work of Shakespeare and his great contemporaries, concrete evidences of the farce of the older fashion still persisted. Characteristic devices of the morality type repeat themselves . . .[2]

[1] C. F. Tucker Brooke, The Tudor Drama (New York, 1911), p. 150.

[2] Ibid., p. 103.

In Ralph Roister Doister the change from the morality tradition to that of the hybrid drama (traditional and Roman drama blended) is quite evident. More alterations than the loss of homiletic tradition are readily noticeable. The characters have lost a great deal of their metaphorical properties and have, in turn, become humanized. For, when the morality Vice's characteristics blended with those of the Roman parasite, a hybrid Vice arose as the consequence, demonstrating his dual nature. He was part man and part evil. He talked about devils, but he no longer did their bidding. It was at this point in his development that the hybrid Vice caused discord for his own amusement, but he had very little or no motive to justify the course of action he pursued.

Then, a new situation occurred in the history of the hybrid Vice, for he underwent bifurcation. And the products of his division are most important to the drama of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Although numerous changes took place in the offspring of the hybrid Vice, these new characters indicate their ancestry through their actions and their nature. Thus, the most suitable names for these late arrivals are the comic-hybrid Vice and the villain-hybrid Vice; for one is a gay fellow who sings and sometimes tells bawdy jokes,

but the other is a villain steeped in evil.

Of these two, the comic-hybrid Vice is the more credible character. Although he resorts to mockery and to disguise, the deceitful intrigue that is so characteristic of his father, the hybrid Vice, is missing from the nature of the comic-hybrid son.

It was William Shakespeare who did the most to alter the hybrid Vice's nature to such an extent that the comic-hybrid Vice came into existence. Shakespeare did this by removing the motiveless desire for intrigue from the hybrid Vice and by replacing his position in drama from that of a prime mover of action to one of quick wit and mirth. As a result of these changes, the comic-hybrid Vice came to life on the Renaissance stage.

By the time the comic-hybrid Vice appeared in the works of William Shakespeare, he was far more man than metaphor.

> . . . it causes him [Shakespeare] to give also to his individual comic figures a deep humanity which renders them more than the mere product of transitory conditions.[3]

Nevertheless, Shakespeare did not allow his comic-hybrid Vice to dominate the play and control the action

[3]Ibid., p. 397.

through scheming. Instead he made his clowns and fools add to the plot with their quick wit, honesty, and all-around good humor. They were not bent on causing trouble for people, and their verbal repartee with the other characters shows their comic double-talk and their wisdom. Never are Shakespeare's comic-hybrid Vice characters vicious; he leaves maliciousness to his villains.

Feste in Twelfth Night is a fine example of Shakespeare's use of the comic-hybrid Vice. Feste is nearly forty years younger than Diccon, and he has lost nearly all of Diccon's roguery. Never does he do any of the actual plotting, and only once does he join the other merry characters in the good sport they have at the expense of Malvolio.

In reality, Feste is not a fool except by profession. He serves as a clown to entertain Olivia and her household. In this capacity he is able to speak his mind about the other characters.

> But the fool as an ironic commentator on the other persons and the action of the play goes far beyond the jesting Vice as critic.[4]

When Olivia plans to mourn seven years for her dead

[4]Robert H. Goldsmith, Wise Fools in Shakespeare (Lansing, 1953), p. 31.

brother, Feste tells her she is the fool to do so when she knows her brother's soul is in heaven. Since Olivia had asked for the fool to be removed, Feste tells the others to remove Olivia since she is really the foolish one.

> The more fool, madonna, to mourn for
> your brother's soul being in Heaven.
> Take away the fool, gentlemen.[5]
>
> (I. v. 72-75)

Feste's mocking is a Vice quality which is deeply rooted in his nature. And, whenever he thinks something is foolish, he ridicules it.

In the same way that he derides Olivia, Feste tends to mock the Duke of Orsino who relishes his own melancholy. When Feste is called in to sing a sad song, he presents one which tells the story of a self-pitying lover who is dying because his love is unrequited. Because Feste is more practical in his outlook on life than the Duke of Orsino is, he feels that Orsino is wasting his life with his love-sickness.

With great wisdom Feste tells the disguised Viola that the world is filled with fools.

[5] Shakespeare the Complete Works, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York, 1952), p. 854-- hereafter cited as Works.

> Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb
> like the sun. It shines everywhere.[6]
>
> (IV. i. 43-44)

The true spirit of the hybrid Vice is evident in Feste after Malvolio, Olivia's Puritanical steward, calls him brainless. However, Malvolio has made himself so unpopular to the others of Olivia's household that Sir Toby Belch, Maria, Fabian, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek plot against him. Feste is not a party to the first part of the gulling to which Malvolio is subjected. But after the letter episode turns out favorably for those who planned it, they wish to go further. Maria asks Feste to disguise himself as Sir Topaz, a priest, and to go to Malvolio who has been locked up because he has been led to believe that he is possessed by a devil.

It is interesting to note at this point that, while many characters disguise themselves in drama, the Vice does so in order to dupe his victim. This is exactly why Feste becomes Sir Topaz. He now can get back at the self-righteous Malvolio. There is a bit of irony in the situation when Feste goes to Malvolio under the pretense of exorcising a devil that plagues the steward. For, Feste himself is proof that Shakespeare had already cast out the evil from the comic-hybrid Vice.

[6]Works., p. 864.

Feste, in the tradition of the hybrid Vice, adds a great deal to the comedy of Twelfth Night when he speaks directly to the nonexistent devil and not to Malvolio. To further confuse Malvolio, Feste tells him that the dark room is light and that he must believe in Pythagoras' doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

After playing Sir Topaz, Feste returns to Malvolio who claims that he has as much control of his mind as Feste has of his own. This is what Feste has been waiting to hear and he responds:

> But as well? Then you are mad indeed, if you be no better in your wits than a fool.[7]
>
> (V. i. 97-98)

When he leaves Malvolio, Feste sings a song which points out the steward's foolishness. However, the song also serves to indicate that Feste is "aware of his decent"[8] from the morality Vice.

> I am gone, sir,
> And anon, sir,
> I'll be with you again,
> In a thrice,
> Like to the old vice,
> You need sustain,
> Who, with dagger of lath,

[7] Works., p. 874.

[8] Green, loc. cit., p. 17.

In his rage and his wrath,
Cries, ah, ha! to the Devil.[9]

(IV. ii. 130-38)

As a result of the change Shakespeare initiates in the comic-hybrid Vice, Feste hurts no one. He has cause for revenge, but he never directly states that his gulling Malvolio is caused by the pompous Puritan's calling him a fool. But more important is the fact that Feste had no part in planning the action against Malvolio. Instead he shows the advancement of the comic-hybrid Vice who, in Shakespeare's plays, is a flesh-and-blood, breathing human being.

However, it is in King Lear that the comic-hybrid Vice truly shows his many sides. Again his purpose is not that of an intriguer. He functions as a court jester and goes by the title of Lear's Fool. In true Vice fashion, he serves as a clown, a counselor, and a mocking, bawdy fellow.

As a counselor he frequently reminds Lear how unwise he has been to give his kingdom to his two evil daughters. He tells the king that he is a fool and should take the clown's place.

[9]Works., p. 874.

"That lord that counseled thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me,
Do thou for him stand.[10]

(I. iv. 154-57)

The Fool repeatedly tells Lear that he has been brought to nothing, and Lear becomes angry at the veracity of this statement and threatens the Fool with a whip. But the Fool knows that truth is not going to be accepted readily when he says:

Truth's a dog must to kennel. He
must be whipped out, when Lady the
brach may sit by the fire and stink.[11]

(I. iv. 124-26)

The Fool is actually Lear's conscience, and in this capacity, he goes farther than any of the comic-hybrid Vice characters. He is a device through which Lear comes to face the truth of his actions-- the very thing he least wants to acknowledge. He constantly reminds Lear who the real fool is, how unkind he has acted toward Cordelia, and what Goneril's and Regan's true natures are. Even as Lear is turned out of Goneril's house the Fool needles him like the small voice of conscience.

[10]Works., p. 1148.

[11]Works., p. 1148.

Thou shouldst not have been old
till thou hadst been wise.[12]

(II. iv. 48)

Like Feste, Lear's Fool is a wise man in the guise of a fool, and, like the typical Vice character, his true nature, in time, is understood by the one he advises. However, Lear does not find himself to be a victim of the Vice as does Mankind in the morality plays, but he finds he is a victim of his own foolishness.

Even with all his advanced nature, Lear's Fool is still very much the old Vice in his bawdy speech. As Lear and his party make ready their journey to Regan's house, the Fool adds a few words of coarseness.

She that's a maid now and
laughs at my departure
Shall not be a maid long,
unless things be cut shorter.[13]

(I. iv. 55-56)

Just as Feste ridicules people's foolishness, Lear's Fool mocks the old man for giving up his kingdom. Even though his main purpose is to get Lear to own up to his error, he chides him by using an egg yolk to make his analogy.

[12]Works., p. 1151.

[13]Works., p. 1151.

> Why after I have cut the egg in the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle and gavest away both parts, thou barest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt. Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away.[14]
>
> (I. iv. 173-78)

With King Lear's Fool, the comic-hybrid Vice comes as far as he can go. He is at once a mocking clown, a conscience, and a brash, humorous fellow, serving the king in all three capacities.

When Lear finally admits he is wrong, the Fool drops out of the play. His services to Lear have been rendered when Lear is able to face the horrible truth by himself and madness comes to relieve his tortured mind. It is here that the comic-hybrid Vice ceased to grow. His position in the tragedy caused him to be put into the mind of the hero. And, when Lear accepted his situation and all the blame that went with it, the comic-hybrid Vice left the play to remain in the mind of a man-- the rightful place for a Vice character, the very place for which he had been searching.

[14] Works., p. 1148.

CHAPTER V

THE VILLAIN-HYBRID VICE

When the hybrid Vice underwent bifurcation, an extraordinary dichotomy came into existence. From the impish natures of Diccon, Matthew Merrygreek, and their counterparts, came the court jesters and fools of the Renaissance drama who deserve the title of comic-hybrid Vice.

But, when the Senecan tragedy and secularization influenced the roguish nature of the hybrid Vice, the outcome was vastly different from that of the comic-hybrid Vice. A full-fledged creature of evil was turned loose upon the stage. He is the villain-hybrid Vice, a designing monster whose outstanding characteristics lie in his ability to plot evil by means of deceit and in his relative lack of motive for doing so. Both of these characteristics the villain-hybrid Vice inherited from the hybrid Vice.

But it is in his lack of sufficient motive that the villain-hybrid Vice is directly related to the hybrid Vice; for the allegorical personifications who preceded the hybrid Vice were strongly motivated by the Psychomachia.

So it was that the villain-hybrid Vice came into the

English drama, bringing characteristics from both native tradition and Senecan tragedy with him. He is no longer trying to win Mankind's soul, but he is still the "incarnation of . . . abstract evil."[1] He is the Vice full grown, and whether he is called a "villain-hybrid Vice," a "Machiavellian," or just plain "villain" is purely a matter of semantics, for the meanings of all three boil down to the same definition-- an evil intriguer without sufficient motive, or evil for the sake of evil. He is evil by nature, and the drama which establishes his environment sets the tone for his specific type of villainy.

If Diccon, the hybrid Vice of Gammer Gurton's Needle, were to play the role of the villain-hybrid Vice of Cambises, he would need a larger dose of evil. For, although Diccon liked to see people punished for the trouble he created, Ambidexter, the Vice in Cambises, through his double-dealing, causes the death of his victim. Nevertheless, in spite of his evil nature, there is a great deal of gross comedian in Ambidexter; for the amusing qualities of the Vice as well as the evil nature filtered into his character.

Cambises, written by Thomas Preston in 1569, indicates the period of transition through which the English

[1]Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (New York, 1958), pp. 337-338.

drama was moving. As secularism and sensationalism pushed the old morality tradition aside, Mankind was no longer the hero. He was being replaced by a historical figure who received earthly punishment for his wrong-doing.

> Cambises is illustrative of the general trend of the English morality tradition: from the generalized human figure to the historical or legendary individual, from religious to secular allegory, from spiritual to material deterioration and destruction, from the comic outcome of final salvation to the tragic end in physical death, from the basic moral concern with doctrine and exhortation to a growing dramatic concern with sensational effects.[2]

Due to the "predominance of the tragic events and the presence of many deaths,"[3] Cambises may be considered a tragedy. However, native morality tradition is so strongly interwoven in the play that it cannot be overlooked. Several of the characters have abstract names which they do not deserve. Murder, Cruelty, Shame, Execution, Trial, and Small Ability "enter just once for some trivial action that earns them their name."[4]

[2]Douglas Cole, Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton, 1962), p. 25.

[3]Ashley H. Thorndike, English Comedy (New York, 1929), p. 60.

[4]Spivack, loc. cit., p. 286.

It is through the character of Ambidexter that the traditional Vice figure is carried into Cambises, and, except for the fact that he acts without a strong motive, Ambidexter serves as a "brilliant example of the morality vice."[5] However, Matthew Merrygreek, the hybrid Vice of Ralph Roister Doister, had been in existence at least ten years before Ambidexter. Merrygreek's lack of motive was absorbed by the Vice in the tragedy, and, as a result of this, the villain-hybrid Vice began his stage career.

Nevertheless, Cambises greatly resembles Skelton's Magnyfycence in that the king changes from a good leader to a wicked one and the Vice characters are extensions of the hero's own evil nature. By following morality tradition, Preston had not been able to put Ambidexter's double-dealing trait into Cambises' nature to fuse the two characters. The influence of the morality play was still too strong for the hero, at this transitional stage in the development of the tragedy, to be a Richard III. He is still Magnyfycence, receiving bad advice and shunning the good.

When Cambises receives wise counsel from Praxaspes,

[5]Charles Read Baskervillc, Virgil B. Heltzel, and Arthur H. Nethercot, ed. Elizabethan and Stuart Plays (New York, 1934), p. 149.

he is outraged and has Praxaspes' son murdered. But, when Ambidexter tells Cambises that the king's own brother is plotting for the throne, Cambises accepts it for truth and commits fratricide. Ambidexter, however, is only partly responsible for Cambises' ruin, for the king is not frail Mankind, buffeted about by evil. He is well started on his way to destruction before Ambidexter gets to him. The cruelty in Cambises' nature was not acquired from his relationship with the Vice; it was a trait within him which enabled Ambidexter to carry out his plans without difficulty. Ambidexter is an outward manifestation of Cambises' own evil-- the double-dealing quality that has not yet been put into the mind of the villain.

Ambidexter introduces himself in the bawdy fashion of the morality Vice. He states that his purpose is to beguile people. If this is his motive, it is, by all means too weak to account for the evil he brings about.

Next, Ambidexter reveals that he is disguised, and he pretends to forget his name. In this way he follows the morality tradition of the old Vices who try to conceal their identity.

> To see if I can all men beguile.
> Ha! my name? My name would
> ye so fain to know?
> Yea, iwis, shall ye, and
> that with all speed!--
> I have forgot it; therefore
> I cannot show.

Ah! ah! now I have it!
I have it indeed!
My name is Ambidexter,
I signify one
That with both hands
finely can play;
. . . . . .
Thus do I run this way
and that way.[6]

(ll. 145-53)

First, Ambidexter goes to Smirdis, Cambises' brother, and advises him to remain silent about the way Cambises governs his kingdom.

My Lord, and if your honor
it shall please,
I can inform you what
is best for your ease:
Let him alone; of his deeds
do not talk;
Then by his side ye may
quietly walk.[7]

(ll. 635-41)

In the manner of the double-dealer, he then goes to King Cambises and tells him that Smirdis is plotting to overthrow him.

And, if it please your grace,
O king, I heard him say,

[6]Ibid., p. 149.

[7]Ibid., p. 159.

> For your death unto the God
> day and night he did pray, . . .[8]
>
> (ll. 676-77)

In keeping with his Vice character, Ambidexter shows no remorse when he finds out that his deception has led Cambises to have Smirdis murdered. Instead, he puts the blame on Cambises.

> Ha, ha! Weep? Nay, laugh
> with both hands to play!
> The king through his cruelty
> hath made him away; . . .[9]

Although Ambidexter is only a dramatized metaphor that represents the double-dealing of a tyrant-king's nature, the fusion of the two characters is necessary to form a true villain. It is interesting to note that Ambidexter predicts Cambises' death; and, as the king dies by his own sword, the double-dealer says he must leave because he fears he will be blamed for the accident. Since he is a personified part of Cambises' nature, it is fitting for him to go out of the play at the same time the king does.

Ambidexter is a hybrid Vice only because he lacks a true purpose. He hangs on to the old morality Vice

[8] Ibid., p. 160.

[9] Ibid., p. 161.

characteristics with great zeal. But his bawdy speech and low associates with whom he cavorts cannot help to keep him in existence. His special art of double-dealing is absorbed along with other Vice qualities by the villain-hybrid Vice.

By the time Christopher Marlowe wrote The Jew of Malta (c. 1590), the double-dealing quality of Ambidexter had become an inward characteristic of the villain. The Jew hero is a full-fledged evil character; his motive for revenge is far too meager to outweigh his plot of evil compounded upon evil which costs the lives of many innocent people, including his only child.

Barabas is a composite of many Vices. He has all of the qualities of Greed, Pride, Ambition, Avarice, Revenge, and Hate as well as the double-dealing nature of Ambidexter. These are the characteristics, when compounded with the desire to plot for no apparent reason, which make up a character called "Machiavellian" in Elizabethan England. The word became synonymous with "villain" after Gentillet's criticism on the "Satanic shrewdness and egotism of Machiavelli's doctrine"[10] spread.

Whether Barabas is called "villain" or "Machiavellian"

[10]C. F. Tucker Brooke, The Tudor Drama (New York, 1911), p. 213.

is not the point, for they are basically the same thing. What is important is that Marlowe allows Machiavel to present the prologue which establishes that Barabas is an unscrupulous villain. In order to further impress the audience with the evil nature of the villain-hero Marlowe gave Barabas the title of "Jew" which symbolized evil incarnate to the Elizabethans.

> Such manifestations of the Jew in drama point to an Elizabethan familiarity with Jewishness in a figurative as well as a literal sense, in which the Jew becomes the dramatic symbol of such moral evils as greed, egoism, infidelity, and worldliness.[11]

At the onset of the play, Barabas is more man than metaphor and he "compels genuine sympathy"[12] when the leaders of Malta take his wealth to pay tribute money to the Turks. There is reason for his wanting God to send evil to Malta to revenge the wrong he has been dealt.

> The plagues of Egypt, and the
> curse of heaven,
> Earth's barrenness, and all
> men's hatred
> Inflict upon them, thou
> great Primus Motor![13]
>
> (I. ii. 163-65)

[11]Cole, loc. cit., p. 41.

[12]Martin S. Day, History of English Literature to 1660 (New York, 1963), p. 266.

[13]Hazelton Spencer, ed. Elizabethan Plays (Boston 1933), p. 72.

But, during the second act Barabas' character comes to light as he begins, for no real purpose, to plot against the citizens of Malta. In an aside he tells how he will act.

> Now will I show myself
> To have more of the serpent
> than the dove; . . .[14]
>
> (II. iii. 36-37)

Shortly after this, Barabas reveals to Ithamore, his slave and partner in evil, the secrets of his villainous life. And, because his evil acts are without motive, he is truly a child of the hybrid Vice.

> As for myself, I walk abroad a-nights,
> And kick sick people groaning under walls,
> Sometimes I go about and poison wells;
> And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,
> I am content to lose some of my crowns,
> That I may, walking in my gallery,
> See 'em go pinion'd along by my door.[15]
>
> (II. iii. 179-85)

Barabas asks Abigail, his daughter, to entertain Lodowick, the son of the governor of Malta. Although he hates Lodowick's father, he has no reason to plot against the boy whom he wishes to see die. However, Barabas does not want to look responsible for the deed, so he plays the

[14] Ibid., p. 72.

[15] Ibid., p. 80.

double-dealer by turning Mathias, Abigail's suitor, against Lodowick. After telling Mathias that Lodowick has romantic intentions, Barabas prepares the audience for his next step.

> So; now will I go in to Lodowick
> And, like a cunning spirit,
> feign some lie,
> Till I have set 'em both at enmity.[16]
>
> (II. iii. 385-87)

The young men duel and die, so the outcome is just what Barabas had wished it to be.

Before he kills Ithamore, Barabas uses him to help carry out the action. Plot after plot is contrived until Barabas has poisoned his daughter along with a group of nuns and murdered a priest.

But this is not the end of his maliciousness, for Barabas surrenders Malta to the Turks and proposes to the "captured governor of Malta that they conspire to destroy the Turks."[17]

His plan is to kill both the officials of Malta as well as the Turks, and he devises a way by which a trap door will drop the men into a boiling cauldron. But, Barabas' plans are foiled when the governor of Malta releases the trap door and Barabas falls into his own snare.

[16]Ibid., p. 82.

[17]Charles N. Coe, Shakespeare's Villains (New York, 1957), p. 48.

There is no motive for the suffering that Barabas brings about, for he "abandons the cause of revenge for one of intrigue."[18] Also, Barabas has no remorse; he is a "villain who overreaches, and so brings upon himself disaster."[19]

As he falls into the cauldron he prepared for the others, he reveals his villainy.

> Then, Barabas, breathe forth your
> fate,
> And in the fury of thy torments
> strive
> To end thy life with resolution--
> Know, Governor, 't was I that
> slew thy son;
> I fram'd the challenge that
> did make them meet.
> Know, Calymath, I aim'd
> thy overthrow,
> And, had I but escap'd
> this strategem,
> I would have brought confusion
> on you all,
> Damn'd Christians, dogs, and
> Turkish infidels![20]
>
> (V. vi. 77-84)

Thus, Barabas is a villain-hybrid Vice who, through

[18]David Bevington, From "Mankind" to Marlowe (Cambridge, 1962), p. 136.

[19]Fredson T. Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587-1642 (Gloucester, 1959), p. 108.

[20]Spencer, loc. cit., p. 99.

his lack of sufficient purpose, shows his hybrid Vice nature. The absence of remorse and his revealing asides are inherited from his grandparents, the morality Vices. When his evil is observed in its totality, it is found to be the summation of the "sort of conscienceless villainy charged to Machiavellian philosophy."[21]

The villain-hybrid Vice is seen many times in Elizabethan tragedy. In two of Shakespeare's characters, Richard III and Iago, this specific villain comes to the fore.

Richard III perhaps has more motive than does Barabas. His deformity and the treatment he is forced to withstand because of it shed some light on his actions. Margaret's tirade illustrates the abusiveness he receives.

> Thou elvish-marked, abortive,
> rooting hog!
> Thou that wast sealed in thy
> nativity
> The slave of nature and the
> son of Hell!
> Thou slander of thy mother's
> heavy womb!
> Thy loathed issue of thy
> father's loins!
> Thou rag of honor![22]
>
> (I. iii. 228-33)

[21]Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936), p. 398.

[22]Shakespeare the Complete Works, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York, 1952), p. 234-- hereafter cited as Works.

Nevertheless, the pain Richard is forced to endure because of his misshapen body does not lend a justifiable reason for the evil that he does. In this respect he is a villain-hybrid Vice.

Moreover, his deformity in itself indicated evil to the Elizabethan audience. It brings to mind the dwarfness of the Vice Fancy in Magnyfycence whose misshapenness was associated with the incomplete growth of the soul as well as the body. The deformed character was expected to have childish impulses which last throughout his adulthood.

This is what Richard's mother refers to when she gives a brief glimpse of the unruly nature that her son has had since his infancy. When Richard says that he has come to comfort her when she mourns for Clarence, the Duchess responds:

> No, by the holy rood, thou
> know'st it well,
> Thou camest on earth to
> make the earth my Hell.
> A grievous burden was thy
> birth to me,
> Tetchy and wayward was thy
> infancy,
> Thy school days frightful,
> desperate, wild and furious,
> Thy prime of manhood daring,
> bold, and venturous
> Thy age confirmed, proud, subtle,
> bloody treacherous,
> More mild, but yet more
> harmful, kind in hatred.

> What comfortable hour canst
> thou name
> That ever graced me in thy
> company?[23]
>
> (IV. iv. 165-74)

Although Richard's mother does not know that he is responsible for Clarence's death, she does realize that Richard has too much evil in him to feel sorrow.

Richard schemes in much the same way Barabas does. Through intrigue he attempts to destroy all those who stand in his way to the throne.

But it is not in his attempts to gain the crown but "on his ability to create dissention"[24] that the true nature of Richard's villainy is disclosed. Like all villain-hybrid Vices, Richard appears to be "human rather than a personification of evil"[25] at first glance. But, in the final analysis, he reveals himself to be mostly metaphor as all villain-hybrid Vices are.

Like all Vice characters, Richard tells the world who he is and what he plans to do. However, unlike the old morality Vice, he has no reason for striking out at all of the people he hurts.

[23] Works., p. 259.

[24] Spivack, loc. cit., p. 397.

[25] Coe, loc. cit., p. 24.

In Richard's opening soliloquy, he tells that he is determined to prove himself a villain, and, if this is a motive, it is in the same category as those of Diccon and Matthew Merrygreek-- self-gratification.

Because Richard is deformed and ugly, he cannot be a lover. Therefore, he states that he is best fit for evil which he will carry out through intrigue.

> I am determined to prove a villain
> And I hate the idle pleasures
> of these days
> Plots have I laid, inductions
> dangerous,
> By drunken prophecies, libels,
> and dreams,
> To set my brother Clarence
> and the King
> In deadly hate the one
> against the other.
> And if King Edward be
> as true and just
> As I am subtle, false, and
> treacherous,
> This day should Clarence
> closely be mewed up,
> About a prophecy, which
> says that G
> Of Edward's heirs the
> murderer shall be.[26]
>
> (I. i. 30-40)

The same Richard who feels that he must be a villain also equates himself with Iniquity, a Vice that personified

[26] Works., pp. 226-227.

a composite of evils in much the same way Richard compounds the meaning of words.

> Thus, like the formal vice Iniquity,
> I moralize two meanings in one word.[27]
>
> (III. i. 82-83)

When duping Edward and Clarence, Richard uses the tactics Barabas used to destroy Lodowick and Mathias. And after his plots come to fruition one by one and the scepter is in his hands, Richard, in the manner of Barabas once again, discloses how he schemed.

> The son of Clarence have I
> pent up close,
> His daughter meanly have
> I matched in marriage,
> The sons of Edward sleep in
> Abraham's bosom, . . .[28]
>
> (IV. iv. 36-38)

Richard shows no sense of guilt. He continues to plot by using the excuse that he cannot stop what he has already begun.

> But I am in
> So far in blood that sin
> will pluck on sin.
> Tear falling pity dwells not
> in this eye.[29]
>
> (IV. ii. 64-66)

[27] Works., p. 244.

[28] Works., p. 257.

[29] Works., p. 256.

Through deceitful intrigue, Richard carries out his evil as gaily as an Ambidexter. His desire is to prove to his own satisfaction that he can be a villain, and he becomes exhilarated by his own evil, just as the villain-hybrid Vice always does. Richard is far more a Vice than he is a man.

The same is true of Iago who goes as far in his deceitful plotting as the villain-hybrid can. He knows that he is a villain when he prepares to bring Othello to ruin.

> And what's he then that says
> I play the villain?
> When this advice is free I
> give and honest,
> Probal to thinking, and
> indeed the course
> To win the Moor again?[30]
>
> (II. iii. 342-45)

Like Ambidexter, who says he forgets his name and then remembers it, Iago first says he will play the villain's part, and then he acknowledges the fact that he is Villainy disguised.

> How am I then a villain
> To counsel Cassio to this
> parallel course,
> Directly to his good? Divinity of Hell!

[30]Works., pp. 1075-1076.

When devils will the blackest
sins put on,
They do suggest at first with
heavenly shows,
As I do now.[31]

(II. iii. 354-59)

Because he fears that Cassio's virtues will bring his evil in the open, Iago plans to have Cassio killed. He dupes Roderigo into helping him carry out his plan, and, as they wait to ambush Cassio, Iago tells why he must do away with goodness.

If Cassio do remain
He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly, . . .[32]

(V. i. 18-20)

Iago will not let anything uncover his disguise and reveal his true nature. And, in order to make him "appear well-rounded and convincing, Shakespeare shows . . . many sides of his nature."[33] He jokes when he chides his wife Emilia for talking too much, and he attends the victory festival with Cassio. He is involved with humanity, but he is not a man. So convincing is he that Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and Roderigo trust him and respect his counsel.

[31]Works., p. 1076.

[32]Works., p. 1093.

[33]Coe, loc. cit., p. 21.

Iago has no real motive for his malfactions. He is angry when Cassio receives the appointment he wants, and he believes, or at least wants to believe, that Othello has led Emilia to unfaithfulness. But these are not reasons enough for him to cost four people their lives, destroy a marriage, and set friend against friend.

Iago is just a step away from the old morality Vice. The only thing that keeps him from being one is his lack of motive. He is not trying to gain possession of peoples' souls. Nevertheless, he cannot stand virtue and sets about to destroy the good and noble Moor, gentle Desdemona, and the virtuous Cassio. His scanty excuse for doing so is even less credible than the ones Barabas and Richard III use. But the villain-hybrid Vice is never a totally credible character. His refusal to release his metaphorical properties keep him from becoming a man.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

From the morality plays, the Vice character took a long journey through English drama. Long after the moralities were in vogue, the Vice character was still popular on the Elizabethan stage.

It was from the miracle cycles that the Vice character took roots, but the morality play was the genre in which he bloomed in full force. His position in the moralities was purely a metaphorical one whereby he became a personified abstraction of an evil characteristic of human nature. He was given the name of a sin, and his actions came from that name. Thus, Greed was a greedy character, and Hate was a hateful one.

The Vice's purpose in the morality plays was to lead Mankind into sin and to cause him to lose his soul. This served as a strong motive. Through deceitful stratagem and disguise, the Vice led weak Mankind away from a virtuous life. While carrying out his plan of action, the Vice amused the audience with his obscene antics and quips. From the beginning he had a duality of nature-- a serious and a comic motif. Later, his two-fold nature allowed him

to take an active position in both comedy and tragedy.

When secular influence reached the morality play, the Vice character began to develop in new areas. At first he remained in plays with moral-political tones, but his purpose was still to lead Mankind to eternal damnation.

It was Latin influence on the morality Vice which caused him to advance and to leave the moral tradition lagging behind him. The roguishness of the Roman parasite character who was noted for his ability at gulling his victims was blended with the nature of the morality Vice. This union brought about a character that Spivack named "hybrid Vice." The hybrid Vice possessed the qualities for which both of his parents were infamous.

He was the center of attention in the farcical interludes when he was given the roles of Matthew Merrygreek in Ralph Roister Doister and Diccon the Bedlam in Gammer Gurton's Needle. At this point, his name revealed, only in part, the kind of character he was, but the hybrid Vice was still part metaphor. However, the purpose which the Vice held in the morality play was lost in the hybrid Vice.

Although the change toward secularism caused him to lose his motive, the hybrid Vice plotted just as relentlessly for no cause as the morality Vice had done to snare Mankind's soul. Running from one victim to the next,

the hybrid Vice duped those who were gullible enough to believe the lies he fabricated. Even though the hybrid Vice brought much gaiety and humor into the drama, he had, from his earliest moments, sadistic and conscienceless qualities which left him entirely free from any guilt as far as he was concerned. He wrought mirthful destruction wherever he went.

Nevertheless, the hybrid Vice of the farce did not remain a stable character. The Renaissance influences were too strong to enable him to stand still. He was forced to change in order to fit into serious drama.

Secularism and Renaissance humanism acted on the hybrid Vice in such a way that the better part of his nature-- his gay clowning qualities-- were used by Shakespeare. This variation from the hybrid Vice is appropriately called the comic-hybrid Vice.

However, the comic-hybrid Vice's desire to devise schemes through deceitful means was all but lost in Shakespeare's court jesters and fools. They did not control the plays through their activity as did their predecessor, the hybrid Vice. Through wit and good humor the comic-hybrid Vices supplied the means through which other characters could be more clearly observed.

Feste points out the foolish ways of both Malvolio, the steward, and Olivia, the woman who employs him. This

gives insight into a cross section of society. Lear's Fool goes even farther than serving as a looking glass. His function is that of being Lear's conscience; by serving in this capacity, he loses his metaphorical nature and returns to the mind of man.

However, at the same time that secularism and Renaissance humanism caused the hybrid Vice of the farce to develop into a comic-hybrid stage, the influence of Senecan tragedy was being absorbed by the malicious part of his nature. The result was a villain-- a villain-hybrid Vice-- who still showed signs of the old Vice's lewd humor. But it was mixed with spite when he was engaged in deceitful intrigue. There was no real motive for the contemptible crimes he caused. Due to his lack of motive he is a true relative of the hybrid Vice, not the morality Vice who was compelled to carry out the orders of Satan and bring destruction to the soul of Mankind.

Ambidexter in Cambises illustrates the transitional stage between the hybrid Vice and the villain. The two-faced qualities of this Vice had not yet been absorbed by the Senecan-tyrant-type character. But, by the time Marlowe had created Barabas and Shakespeare had brought Richard III and Iago to the stage, the double-dealing quality of Ambidexter's nature was deeply instilled in

the Villain. But the villain-hybrid Vice was not a totally believable character; he still was too much metaphor to be convincing.

The long journey of the Vice character was over after the hybrid Vice underwent bifurcation. Neither of his two progeny could go any further in their development, for the Vice had become as good and as evil as he could go without changing into some other kind of character. The sharp wit and good humor of the comic-hybrid Vice and the incredible cruelty of the villain-hybrid Vice provided the zest and the action for some of the greatest drama in English literature.

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